

Designing homelessness out of the asylum and immigration system

Dear Party Leaders,

We write to you as organisations and charities, many of us frontline services, that support and advocate for migrants experiencing, and at risk of, homelessness and destitution due to the asylum and immigration system.

We believe that the General Election provides an important opportunity for the next government to end homelessness for everyone.

Homelessness has a devastating impact on people and communities. It strips people of dignity and agency, puts them at risk, and prevents them from thriving and fully participating in their communities and wider society. No one should become, or remain, homeless because of their immigration status or their interaction with the asylum system.

But this is the case for many migrants who are made much more vulnerable to experiencing homelessness, or face additional barriers to moving on from homelessness, than people with British citizenship, due to the current asylum and immigration system. Preventing homelessness must be a considered an essential part of the asylum and immigration system, alongside greater collaboration with housing, welfare, voluntary and statutory services, and improved recourse to justice through our legal systems.

Together, the next government, alongside charities and people with lived experience, can deliver both the immediate and long-term changes needed to ensure the asylum and immigration system no longer drives migrants into homelessness, and instead contributes to preventing and ending homelessness for all.

To achieve this, the next government should ensure that;

- **A cross-departmental approach is taken to tackling rough sleeping and homelessness.**
- **Changes to the immigration and asylum system do not actively contribute to an increase in migrant homelessness.**
- **The flow of homelessness from the asylum system is stopped.**
- **Fair access to quality legal advice is improved and expanded.**
- **The impact of restrictions on public funds on homelessness are confronted and addressed.**

Finally, any government that is committed to ending homelessness must focus on evidence-based solutions, including those set out above, that will strengthen our communities for the benefit of all, rather than divide and weaken them through punitive, discriminatory policies and inflammatory rhetoric that scapegoat and marginalise migrants.

No strategy to end homelessness can be achieved without ending homelessness for everyone and that must include those made homeless because of the immigration and asylum system. We stand ready to collaborate with the next government to deliver the changes needed to achieve this.

Yours sincerely,

Rick Henderson, CEO, Homeless Link
Bridget Young, Director, NACCOM